



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Official Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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Sunday, Feb. 1, 2009

Iraq Holds Provincial Elections

BAGHDAD — With protection from their Security Forces, Iraqi citizens went to the polls to cast their ballots in the provincial elections, Jan. 31.

Iraqi Security Forces assigned to the 8th National Police Brigade, 2nd NP Division, were in charge of security during Election Day, with Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers acting in a supporting role.

Polling stations across eastern Baghdad were crowded as voters were subject to security screenings by Iraqi Policemen prior to voting. Polls opened at 7 a.m. and closed at 6 p.m.

Schools all across eastern Baghdad were converted to polling stations during the elections. Before heading to his local polling station in New Baghdad, an Iraqi man, who simply wanted to be called Mohammed, expressed his excitement.

“I’m very optimistic about the vote this time around, and I feel confident in our government,” said Mohammed, a taxi driver and father of two.

“I feel this will be a new beginning

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A man proudly shows his ink-stained index finger after casting his vote during the Iraqi provincial elections, Jan. 31, 2009. While his daughter didn’t vote, she proudly holds up her index finger, just like her dad. Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea, 82nd Airborne Division.

This Week in News ...

Elections Bringing Change to Iraq

Iraqis Witness Monumental Day

Oasis Market Opens Doors in Dhi Qar



Press Briefing: Maj. Gen. Eyre, Mr. Hancock, Jan. 25

Reconstruction: The Latest Corps of Engineers News

AFN’s Iraqi Freedom Minute: This Week’s Broadcasts

COB ADDER — Iraqi businessmen recently held a grand opening for the new Oasis Market here, as part of a program initiative to spark the local economy in Dhi Qar Province.

The market opening is part of the Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone Program (I-BIZP), which started in October 2008 to help local businesses develop within the security of a military installation.

Both military and civilian customers can purchase some of the latest electronic equipment at the market, to include televisions, DVDs and other entertainment products.

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Two-time Olympian Farouk Changchun (left) and the Iraqi boxers he trains pose with gear donated by USA Boxing for the reopening of the Adhamiyah Sports Complex in northeast Baghdad, Jan. 27, 2009. Photo by Sgt. Zachary Mott, 4th Infantry Division.

Adhamiyah Reopens Sports Complex

ADHAMIYAH — As a two-time Olympian shouted instructions from the side, two boxers sparred for the crowd of onlookers to celebrate the reopening of the Adhamiyah Sports Complex in northeast Baghdad, Jan. 27.

Following a \$200,000 facelift that was funded through commander's emergency relief program funds, the Adhamiyah Sports Complex now boasts a remodeled boxing gym, an indoor basketball court/soccer field, administration office and a FIFA-regulation 5-on-5 Astroturf soccer field.

"Adhamiyah as a whole has been waiting for this complex to reopen for a while," said Capt. William Murphy, a Civil Affairs team leader with Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

The Adhamiyah Sports Complex was once the training grounds for many former Iraqi Olympians. One of those former

national champions, Farouk Changchun, now heads the boxing program here.

Changchun, who competed in the 1976 and 1980 Olympics, served as the flag bearer for his country during the 1980 Moscow Games. As his young protégées put on a demonstration for the crowd, Changchun gushed over the new gear donated by USA Boxing. The donation included head gear, gloves, trunks and shirts.

"We are happy to get any help in sports material and supplies from USA Boxing because it spreads the feeling of humanity everywhere," Changchun said. "A lot of people think that boxers have very harsh feelings and a very hard heart, but it's not true, boxers have a very kind heart."

Changchun said he is hopeful that some of his students will one day get to represent Iraq as he was able to do twice in his lifetime. "I'm hoping that there are future

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IP Receives Forensics Equipment

CAMP RAMADI — For years, the Iraqi Police (IP) had to make do without the scientific tools most police forces around the world rely upon to solve crimes. This is no longer the case.

Coalition forces recently provided the IP with 21st century forensics equipment to furnish the newly-opened Anbar Forensics Center. This equipment will enhance the IP's capability in conducting criminal investigations and prosecutions.

Iraqis were using equipment dating back to the 1950s, and many of their investigations failed due to lack of evidence, according to Col. Azzam Abdel-Latif, chief of forensics for Anbar provincial IP.

"We are in 2009. Things have changed, and now thanks to the U.S., our new equipment will help to stop crimes," Latif continued.

Providing Iraqis with this forensics technology has further enabled them to solve crimes independently. Extracting latent fingerprints from crime scenes and criminal weapons without contaminating evidence is an important capability needed to ensure convictions.

"We are now able to squeeze crime into a corner ... control and defeat it," said Latif.

The equipment donated consisted of advanced forensics gear ranging from

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Moments in Time: Still Images from the Military's Best Photographers



U.S. and Iraqi Army Soldiers conduct a joint patrol in Baghdad, Jan. 18, 2009. Photo by Sgt. Edwin Bridges.



Iraqi children stop playing and pose for a photo in Baghdad, Jan. 20, 2009. Photo by Sgt. Edwin Bridges.



An Iraqi Police officer displays his ink-stained finger after voting in Baghdad, Jan. 28, 2009. Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea.